Cesare Deluisi

English 101 – Dr. Sherry

**Sororities**

Previous Thoughts:

For many years modern media has turned the true meaning of what it means to be in a sorority in several stereotypical cases such as paying for friendship, not capable of succeeding academically, and being hazed; however this is not often the case and this has changed. With research, I will explain why and how this has happened.

Background:

In 1776, fraternities entered the United States. When first established, fraternities were literacy and social nature, but not Greek. In meetings, things such as taxations and freedom were discussed. At Union College in 1831, fraternities turned over to a more social group and expanded to universities all over the United States. In 1870, fraternities finally found a name for women fraternities, which are now “sororities”. In the beginning time of sororities, dues were only if you lived in the sorority’s “chapter house”. Academics were always important to sorority sisters in order to not fall behind in their studies, and represent the sorority with an outstanding GPA. Hazing was a necessary thing back then, and everyone was hazed. According to Rebecca Nathan in “My Freshman year” she expresses that students felt that joining a sorority can make you feel completely lost. The point she is trying to make is that you become the same as everyone else in the group, other than standing out as an individual in a group. Groups that are gathered together are meant to be diverse students, and I believe that diverse people make up a sorority, not one image, but so many diverse people with one name.

Findings:

In the beginning of my research I asked my two roommates who are now active members of Greek life what their thoughts of joining a sorority were before they came to college.

*“What was your opinion on sororities when you first came to Bloomsburg? I thought it was the most shallow thing ever, I thought people paid way too much money for friends, and I was totally against it but my mind was so wrong and I want everyone to give sororities a fair chance because it was the best decision I have made in college so far.”*

*“What was your opinion on sororities when you first came to Bloomsburg? I thought sororities were a great way to get involved on campus, but I didn't think I would have the money to join one. So I waited till the time came and then made up my mind.”*

Both roommates clearly answered this question honestly with some true statements that allowed us to believe that they have heard and believed the stereotypes that are said. The stereotypes still kept remained them to keep an open mind. People also believe that joining sororities believe that you are paying for friendship because sorority members pay dues in order to be a member. “If I pay for my friends I sure don’t pay enough”. Paying dues is to support the rituals, traditions, and activities to keep the sorority going, not to pay a certain amount of money to call this many people your friends. Another popular stereotype found is that students in Greek life do not take academics seriously, or succeed. All universities including Bloomsburg, students must acquire a 2.5 GPA in order to even become a member of Greek life, and must keep that GPA in order to remain in a good academic standing in one’s organization. Students from several different universities over the country have given me feedback about their hazing process. What needs to be stated to students thinking about becoming a member of the Greek community is that not every organization hazes. Hazing is illegal, but is performed to show new members the traditions of certain organizations. Hazing can be performed in many different ways it is not the worse of what potential members are thinking, there is all reasoning and meaning behind everything said, and done to members. Brothers and sisters have been through hazing, and pledging in hundreds of different ways all over the country for years sharing stories of their pledging experiences. When initiated as an active member, the memories of pledging will be a memory you will be able to share with people several generations older than you and who have done the same exact things when they were new members.

Conclusion:

Stereotypes exist everywhere in society and we cannot escape them. Sororities are more than just money for friends, or being degraded through hazing. To be labeled as a sorority member means one can label themselves a member of a sisterhood, with an everlasting bond with hundreds of people who represent the same letters as you do. For most clubs, people pay in order for clubs to be able to do activities, their will always be people in life that will be forcing you to do something, and school work is always a student’s number one priority when they come to college. Although these stereotypes exist and will continue to exist, one must experience the life of a sorority member by becoming a member. An individual can stand out in a sorority, even if hundreds of people are wearing the same letters.

References

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